



# The Journal

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June 4, 2015

## Graduates Receive Diplomas in Ceremony Onboard NSAB

By Andrew  
Damstedt  
NSAB Public Affairs  
staff writer

With shouts of “Go, Mom!” and “Good job!” and “This is your moment,” 10 graduates from Southern Illinois University (SIU) took the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center Memorial Auditorium stage Friday to receive their diplomas.

“This is one of the best days of my life,” said graduate Jacqueline Thomas, a Navy retiree who is the secretary for Brig. Gen. Jeffrey B. Clark, medical center director. “The ceremony was fantastic. It was great.”

The graduation was hosted by Navy College-Bethesda, which houses an SIU extended campus in its offices in Building 17. Navy College assists service members with programs such as tuition assistance, on-base courses and with general advice about continuing education.

Navy College-Bethesda Director Elizabeth Baker said while the graduates utilized those services, the students themselves were the most responsible for completing their schooling.

“Their own initiative and drive has really gotten them to where they are today,” she said.

Graduate Sonya Benlizar, also a Navy retiree, said Navy College provided excellent support in helping her finish her degree.

“I’m just happy and excited,” she said. “I’m happy that not just the Navy but the military has a way of helping us grow; not just here in



Photo by MC3 Hank Gettys

**New graduates of Southern Illinois University turn their tassels in a ceremony at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center May 29, signifying their new status as college graduates.**

the military serving the country, but to grow personally.”

Naval Support Activity Bethesda (NSAB) Executive Director Bill Meekins congratulated the graduates and thanked their family members for supporting them in their continuing education.

“There should be no

doubt in your minds about the value of your degree and how the education you received here will help you pursue your career and dreams,” said commencement speaker Scott Collins, SIU School of Allied Health director. “Think for a moment about how different you are today; how different

your lives are compared to when you began your studies. You have grown academically, personally, professionally and socially.”

Graduate Stephanie Taylor, who started pursuing her degree in 2010, said the time she spent away from her family was difficult but that she

was happy to have finally completed her degree.

“It feels very, very, very refreshing and awesome,” said Taylor, an Army retiree who worked at NSAB until recently. “I’ve been working on it for a long time and I’m very excited about it.”

Benlizar, Taylor and Thomas all received the

health care management bachelor’s degree at Friday’s ceremony along with Demaris Gomez, Antonio Sanders, Dana Sledge, James Wilcher and John Wilcher. John Elchert and Humberto Ferriera received the workforce education and development bachelor’s degree.



# Commander's Column



June 14, we will celebrate Flag Day. I think it's important to reflect on the significance of the flag of our Nation, and I would like to share some information and thoughts with you in advance of the observance later this month.

The Stars and Stripes originated as a result of a resolution adopted by the Marine Committee of the Second Continental Congress at Philadelphia on June 14, 1777. The resolution read: "Resolved that the flag of the United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field representing a new constellation." The first celebration of the U.S. Flag's birthday was held in 1877 on the 100th anniversary of the Flag Resolution of 1777. However, it is believed that the first annual recognition of the flag's birthday dates back to 1885 when school teacher, B. J. Cigrand, first organized a group of Wisconsin school children to observe June 14, the 108th anniversary of the official adoption of The Stars and Stripes, as the Flag's Birthday. There is some discussion as to the 'Father of Flag Day,' both Cigrand and William T. Kerr, from Pittsburgh, PA and the founder of the American Flag Day Association in 1888, have been given this designation.

Just a few years later the efforts of another school teacher, George Balch, led to the formal observance of 'Flag Day' on June 14 by the New York State Board of Education. Over the following years as many as 36 state and local governments began adopting the annual observance. For over 30 years, Flag Day remained a state and local celebration.

In 1916, the anniversary of the Flag Resolution of 1777 became a nationally observed event by a proclamation by President Woodrow Wilson, as did President Calvin Coolidge in 1927. However, it was not designated as National Flag Day until August 3rd, 1949, when an Act of Congress signed in to law by President Harry Truman designated June 14th of each year as National Flag Day. Today, Flag Day is celebrated in various ways, but the goal should be to preserve

the traditions, history, pride, and respect that the nation's symbol, Old Glory, deserves.

One of the highlights of many retirement ceremonies is the reading of "Old Glory" and the flag presentation. The following is a Navy version of the text that is read.

I am the flag of the United States of America. My name is Old Glory.  
I fly atop the world's tallest buildings.  
I stand watch in America's halls of justice.  
I fly majestically over great institutions of learning.  
I stand guard with the greatest military power in the world.  
Look up and see me!  
I stand for peace, honor, truth, and justice. I stand for freedom.  
I am confident...I am arrogant. I am proud.  
When I am flown with my fellow banners, my head is held a little higher - my colors a little truer.  
I bow to no one.  
I am recognized all over the world.  
I am worshipped. I am saluted. I am respected. I am revered. I am loved. And I am feared.

For more than 200 years, I have fought in every battle of every war; Gettysburg, Shiloh, Appomattox, San Juan Hill, the Trenches of France, the Argonne Forest, Anzio, Rome, the beaches of Normandy, the deserts of Africa, the cane fields of the Philippines.

The rice paddies and jungles of Guam, Okinawa, Tarawa, Korea, Viet-

nam and in the heat of the Persian Gulf and a score of other places long forgotten by all but those who were with me.

I was there!  
I led my Sailors and Marines.  
I followed them. I watch over them. They love me.  
I was on a small hill on Iwo Jima.  
I was dirty, battle-worn and tired, but my Sailors and Marines cheered me, and I was proud.

I have been soiled, burned, torn and trampled on the streets of countries I have helped set free.  
It does not hurt...for I am invincible.  
I have been soiled, burned, torn and trampled on the streets of my country and when it is by those with whom I have served in battle...it hurts.  
But I shall overcome... for I am strong.  
I have slipped the bonds of Earth and stand watch over the new frontiers of space from my vantage point on the moon.  
I have been a silent witness to all of America's finest hours.  
But my finest hour comes when I am torn into strips to be used for bandages for my wounded comrades on the field of battle, when I fly at half-mast to honor my Sailors and Marines... and when I lie in the trembling arms of a grieving mother at the graveside of her fallen son or daughter. I am proud.  
My Name is Old Glory.  
Dear God...Long may I wave. Long may I wave!  
During Flag Day, please remember to honor and remember our flag. Most importantly, remember what the flag represents to our Nation and the world. It is the banner for freedom and democracy. Maintaining that banner has come at great cost to our country and its Service Members. Long may it wave...Dear God, long may it wave.

**All Ahead Flank,  
David A. Bitonti, Capt., DC, USN  
Commanding Officer  
Naval Support Activity Bethesda**

# Bethesda Notebook

**LGBT Pride Fair**  
The Bethesda Multicultural Committee and Gay, Lesbian and Supportive Service Members (G.L.A.S.S.) will host a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride Fair June 12 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Bldg. 9 mezzanine. The event is being held in conjunction with Pride Week, June 8-12. Everyone is invited to attend. Cake and refreshment will be served at noon. For more information, contact HM3 Kayla Watson at kayla.m.watson18.mil@mail.mil.

**Leadership Academy**  
The next Walter Reed Bethesda Leadership Academy is scheduled for June 8-12 in the Heroes Zone, Bldg. 5, Rm. 3028. The academy is for anyone in a middle manager role or aspiring to a middle manager role. The academy includes discussions on leadership and development, resources, quality improvement, personnel management, 21st century health care, business management and the Patient Experience. To register or for more information, visit <http://tinyurl.com/WRNMMC-LSA-RBCT>.

**Prostate Cancer Support Group**  
The Prostate Cancer Support Group meets at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) on the third Thursday of every month. The next meeting will be June 18 from 1 to 2 p.m. and from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the America Building, River Conference Room, third floor. Spouses/partners are invited. Military ID is required for base access. For those without a military ID, call the Prostate Center at 301-319-2900 at least four business days prior to the event for base access. For more information contact retired Col. Jane Hudak at 301-319-2918 or jane.l.hudak.ctr@mail.mil.

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# Asian American, Pacific Islander Heritage Month

## WRNMMC Celebrates 'Many Cultures, One Voice'

**By Bernard S. Little**  
WRNMMC Public  
Affairs staff writer

Celebrating with food, dance and speakers, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) observed Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month during a program May 28 in the America Building.

Master Chief Petty Officer Alma Robinson, guest speaker at the program, focused on this year's theme for the observance, "Many Cultures, One Voice: Promote Equality and Inclusion," during her presentation. She traces her cultural heritage to the Philippines.

Robinson explained Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month originated in

June 1977 when Reps. Frank Horton of New York and Norman Y. Mineta of California introduced a resolution in the U.S. House of Representatives to proclaim the first 10 days of May as Asian-Pacific Heritage Week. The following month, Senators Daniel Inouye and Spark Matsunaga, both of Hawaii, introduced a similar bill in the Senate. Both acts were passed, and on Oct. 5, 1978, President Jimmy Carter signed a joint resolution for the celebration. Twelve years later, President George H.W. Bush signed a bill passed by Congress to extend Asian-American Heritage Week to a month-long observance.

The month of May was chosen for the celebration to commemorate the immigration

of the first Japanese to the United States on May 7, 1843, and to mark the anniversary of the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad on May 10, 1869. Most of the workers who laid the tracks for the railroad were Chinese immigrants, according to Library of Congress officials who host the website <http://asianpacificheritage.gov/about.html>.

Robinson added that more than 56 ethnic groups who speak over 100 languages fall under the Asian American and Pacific Islander heritage umbrella.

"In May 1988, I joined the U.S. Navy," said Robinson, from Oahu, Hawaii. She recently returned to the states

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Photos by Bernard S. Little

**Students from the Natananjali School of Dance perform during Walter Reed National Military Medical Center's Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month program May 28. The Bethesda Multi-Cultural Committee coordinated the event.**



Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Christopher Krucke

**Graduates of the Clinical Nurse Transition Program stand proud during the Nurse Week kick-off in the Memorial Auditorium at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. This year's theme was "Ethical Practice. Quality Care."**

**By MC1 (AW)**  
**Chris Krucke**  
WRNMMC Public  
Affairs staff writer

"They might not remember our name, but they will never forget the way we treated them," poet and author Maya Angelou once said.

Maj. Gen. Dorothy A. Hogg, director of Medical Operations Research and chief of the

Air Force Nurse Corps, delivered the quote during a recent program celebrating nurses at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC). The program not only celebrated Nurses Week (May 6-12) with the theme "Ethical Practice, Quality Care," but also recognized a long tradition within the nursing profession of continuous education.

## Nurses Put Focus on 'Ethical Practice, Quality Care'

That tradition continues at WRNMMC with the Clinical Nurse Transition Program (CNTP).

CNTP is designed to orient recent graduates and registered nurses with minimal clinical experience to the profession of nursing and the U.S. military. The program consists of computer-based training, classroom lectures, seminars and hands-on clinical experience.

Thirteen Army and Navy nurses completed the 25-week CNTP on May 7. "These novice nurses managed progressive assignments to care for patients with complex nursing needs on the medical surgical units. Many of them have already been nominated by patients and family members for the prestigious DAISY Award for extraordinary nursing," said Army Lt. Col. Cindy Goldberg, CNTP director.

2nd Lt. Elizabeth Marlyne Rozell, 5E staff

nurse, WRNMMC, attended the CNTP. She said she appreciates the orientation, explaining there may be approximately six months from when a nursing school student graduates to when the nurse actually makes it onto the floor to use their skills. "The [CNTP] gave me the opportunity to gain the confidence necessary to be a good, competent nurse. I was given many opportunities to hone my nursing skills and think critically. Also, I enjoyed the structure of the program. The program not only gives us the opportunity [to be] hands-on but also incorporates seminars and classes to help us better understand the military."

The CNTP is divided into three phases. The first 12 weeks are with a preceptor who helps orient the new nurse to the floor, the work environment, policies, the workflow and load of the staff. The next eight weeks, the new

nurse is working independently as a registered nurse within a team of other RNs, LPNs, and techs/CNAs/corpsmen/medics. The last phase is when the new nurses participate in "mini-rotations." This is an opportunity to gain other skill sets and see how other departments work within the hospital.

Rozell said she has rotated between the neonatal intensive care unit (ICU), medical ICU, mother-infant care center, Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter, and will also be rotating to work on Pediatrics, Wound Care Team, and in the Emergency Department.

Other nurse training courses are available here at WRNMMC.

The longest course is the Phase II Practical Nurse Course (PNC) led by Lt. Col. Christine Ludwig, director of the Practical Nurse Course, and Army Sgt. 1st Class Steven Brown, the course's non-commis-

sioned officer-in-charge.

According to Ludwig, the PNC is a 54-week Initial Entry Training Course which takes new Soldiers, and now Sailors, and educates them to become practicing nurses. "The students who successfully graduate from the course are able to take the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-PN) for Practical Nurses. In 2014, this historically Army nursing program opened up to Navy Corpsmen at WRNMMC.

In March of 2015, the first combined class of Army Soldiers and Navy Corpsmen graduated. The second class is due to graduate in August 2015.

Other shorter courses of a few days to a week covering leadership and management are also offered through such courses as the Charge Nurse Course and the Leadership Academy. Offering a variety of

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## Legal Counsel Available for Soldiers in the Medical Evaluation Board Process

### By Soldiers' Medical Evaluation Board Counsel

Soldiers in transition at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center are provided legal counsel at no personal expense while undergoing the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) process, more commonly known as the Medical Evaluation Board (MEB). A qualified and trained attorney and paralegal are available to assist Soldiers throughout the entire process, which includes the MEB and Physical Evaluation Board (PEB) stages. Whether you have questions or concerns prior to being referred into the process or you are nearing the end of the process and pending retirement/transition, the Office of the SMEBC is available to assist you. Our offices are on the second floor of Bldg. 62, which is located across the street from the America Garage and the medical center.

The SMEBC is independently assigned and rated and does not advise the MEB, PEB, Warrior Transition Battalion, or your chain of command. Information you provide to the SMEBC is confidential. Their sole function is to advise and represent you, the Soldier. They will work diligently to ensure you make fully informed decisions, and then assist you in every way possible to achieve the desired outcome. The SMEBC is available to ALL Soldiers – Active Duty, Reserve, and National Guard. The SMEBC will ensure you are aware of your rights, options and potential outcomes to assist you with making some very important decisions throughout the process – decisions that could have significant, long-term implications for you, your family and your future. The SMEBC is specifically trained to recognize and identify critical issues and advise you of the options. Bottom line: The SMEBC is your advocate in the IDES process and works for you.

Although legal advice and representation is available to you throughout the entire process, there are three key

points in the process where we highly encourage you to reach out to our office for assistance:

- The first is immediately upon referral (or notification of pending referral) into the MEB process. Most often, laying the groundwork for success starts early. The SMEBC can help you explore and understand the options and potential benefits, and can also assist with formulating a specific plan to work toward the desired outcome.

- The second important point occurs once you receive your Narrative Summary (NARSUM), which signifies the end of the MEB phase. At this point in the process, you have numerous election options to consider and your time to do so is very limited (initially five calendar days). Contacting the SMEBC as soon as possible will ensure adequate time to review, receive advice, and respond accordingly to the MEB.

- The third and final critically important point in the process is once you receive the findings of the Informal PEB (IPEB) and your proposed Veterans Affairs (VA) disability ratings. At this stage, you will have multiple election options to consider and must choose how to best respond to the IPEB and VA. Again, there is a narrow timeline in which to respond (initially ten calendar days). The SMEBC will review both the IPEB and VA documents along with you, ensuring the IPEB has documented your conditions accurately and the VA has assigned appropriate disability ratings to those conditions in accordance with the law and relevant regulations.

In summary, Soldiers undergoing the IDES/MEB process are entitled to and have legal representation available to them at no personal expense. We encourage you to take advantage of our service. The OSMEBC stands ready and willing to provide diligent advocacy and representation to each individual Soldier and case. Contact us today at (301) 400-0167/0168. Thank you for your service.

## NURSES

### Continued from pg. 3

short courses allows the enlisted and junior officers nurses to gain teaching experience as they hone their instructor skills without needing to become certified through the Instructor Training Course.

Rozell said Nurses Week is a chance to celebrate all the hard work nurses do. "Nurses, in my definition, who should be celebrated not only are registered nurses, but also in-

clude LPNs, nursing students, and CNAs/ techs/ corpsmen and medics. These people spend (usually) more than 12 hours a day on the floor with patients who are in need not only physically, but also emotionally and spiritually.

"At the end of the day or week, it's all worth it when someone says, 'Thank you for what you did. It means a lot to me.' Then you know you touched someone's life. They may not remember your name, but they will always remember the way you made them feel. Then you can say, 'What I do matters,'" Rozell concluded.



# Spinz Grand Opening



Photo by MC3 Hank Gettys

Capt. David A. Bitonti (center), Naval Support Activity Bethesda (NSAB) commanding officer, along with Noel Dysart (left), the NSAB Bowling Center manager, and Bill O'Donnell, Spinz manager, cut the ribbon, announcing the grand opening of the new Spinz restaurant at the NSAB Bowling Center.

# Bitonti Leads Motorcycle Ride



Photo by Andrew Damstedt

Naval Support Activity Bethesda Commanding Officer Capt. David A. Bitonti and his wife, Lisa Bitonti, lead a group of Rolling Thunder motorcyclists around the installation May 22. Motorcyclists from all across the country came to Washington, D.C. for the annual Rolling Thunder ride over Memorial Day weekend.

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# MWR's 3rd Annual Character Brunch



Photos by Karen Carbone

The Warrior Café on Naval Support Activity Bethesda was filled to capacity May 30 as delighted guests visited with their favorite cartoon personalities at Morale, Welfare and Recreation's 3rd Annual Character Brunch. Dedicated volunteers from the Maryland Patriotic Guard, American Red Cross and the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center Junior Enlisted Mess in addition to helpers from Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, the Warrior Family Coordination Cell and Coalition of Sailors Against Destructive Decisions/Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers helped make the event a success. Diners enjoyed a themed buffet menu including Mickey Mouse-shaped pancakes, an omelet bar and a make-your-own sundae station. In addition to their meal and interactions with much-loved characters, the children received wands, tiaras, superhero bracelets and personalized photo keepsakes.





# New WRNMMC CFL Takes the Reigns

By MC1(AW)

Chris Krucke

WRNMMC Public Affairs  
staff writer

Both the Navy and the Army are conducting their individual spring 2015 physical readiness tests (PRT) known as the Navy Physical Fitness Assessment (PFA) and the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT).

"The same standards of performance remain a strict regulation for both services," said Navy Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Annie Martin, the new command fitness leader (CFL) for Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC).

"It is a performance test that indicates a Soldier's ability to perform physically and handle his or her own body weight," said Army Sgt. Maj. Jeffrey M. Zak, chief clinical non-commissioned officer, WRNMMC.

Every branch in the U.S. military has their own version of the fitness test. The tests are all based on the same principles of core strength, endurance and cardiovascular respiratory fitness.

According to age group, participants have two min-

utes to score as many push-ups and sit/curl-ups as possible and complete a cardio event as fast as they can.

Martin said participating members are proctored by trained individuals who account for proper form and adherence to rules.

Although every fitness test is based on the same core principles, each service's test has unique characteristics.

According to Martin, the biggest difference between Army and Navy PRT is that the Army tests Body Composition Assessment (BCA) and the PRT separately. If a Navy member fails the BCA, they are not authorized to participate in the PRT; however, Army members can fail either/or both components because if an Army member fails their BCA, they are still authorized to participate in the physical portion.

"Another difference to note is the Navy run is one and a half miles, whereas the Army run is two miles," Martin said.

Martin said WRNMMC offers Navy members five cardio options: an outdoor run, treadmill, bike, elliptical machine, or swim.

According to Zak, unlike the Navy, "the Army does not break down points in



Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Christopher Krucke

**With the blast of a whistle, Navy personnel burst off the starting line to compete against the clock during the Spring 2015 Physical Readiness Test at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation sports complex on Naval Support Activity Bethesda.**

each category as excellent through satisfactory and failure." He said a Soldier must score a minimum of 60 points on an event to pass that event. Not scoring at least 60 points in any event constitutes a failure for that event and a failure for the entire APFT.

Zak continued, "A Soldier's APFT score is the accumulated score of all three events. A score of over 270 with at least 90 points in each event will earn a Soldier the Physical Fitness Badge."

The badge is a patch that is sewn on the physical fit-

ness uniform.

Unlike the Navy PFA, Soldiers do not get to choose which cardio event they can perform. Participants can only do the two mile run unless the Soldier has a permanent medical profile that precludes them from the two mile run. In this case they can take an alternate aerobic event.

Zak said, "The most common is the 2.5 mile walk but some Soldiers may take the 800 yard swim, 6.2 mile bike, or 6.2 mile stationary-cycle ergometer test."

Martin, who just took over as CFL this winter, said

taking the position was a big deal for her.

A year and a half ago Martin said she weighed 200 pounds, could barely do 20 pushups and running was a struggle because of her weight and asthma. "My wakeup call was when I could not climb a flight of stairs and I would have shortness of breath," she said. "I actually wanted to work in the PRT Office last year but I was slated to go work in the hospital instead."

After choosing healthier meal choices and making time to work out daily "a pri-

ority," Martin said she currently weighs 156 pounds, can do more than 50 push-ups, and her run time has improved dramatically.

"After I made E6, I was told that I would be the CFL. At first I was in disbelief until my predecessor contacted me and told me I had the job," said Martin.

As CFL one of the things Martin is in charge of is the Fitness Enhancement Program (FEP).

"We alternate our FEP sessions to cover a variety of exercises," Martin said. "We construct a workout of the day that is followed for all three sessions that day. Workouts encompass strength training, cardio, plyometric, and calisthenics. In addition, every Tuesday and Thursday at 11 a.m. we offer a swim workout."

If you are looking to improve your fitness level, the FEP sessions are open to anyone who would like to join. FEP sessions are available Monday through Friday at 6 a.m., 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Each session is one hour long and consists of a warm-up, workout, and cool down. The muster location is Bldg. 17's Atrium. To contact WRNMMC's Command Fitness Office, call 310-295-5502.

## Navy Lodge Bethesda Employees Receive Professional Certifications

By Andrew Damstedt

NSAB Public Affairs  
staff writer

They're the greeters, the cleanup crew, the maintenance workers and laundry staff of Navy Lodge Bethesda – and now 10 of Navy Lodge Bethesda's employees have received professional certifications after completing courses through the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute.

Naval Support Activity Bethesda (NSAB) Commanding Officer Capt. David A. Bitonti handed out the certificates to the 10 employees May 21 in a ceremony at Navy Lodge Bethesda.

"I appreciate and applaud your efforts in trying to get those certifications and also thank you for do-

ing that because that allows us to provide better service to our guests who come on the installation for whatever reason they're going to be here to visit with us," Bitonti said. "Congratulations. We're very proud of you."

Ana Herrera-Ruiz, Navy Lodge Bethesda general manager, said to complete the certificates requires each candidate to score at least 75 percent on both the written exam and skill-validation test, which was completed on site.

She said she was proud of her employees who completed the certificates and said it showed that "we are moving in the right direction of providing excellent service to our military and their families by empowering our associates through training



**Navy Lodge Bethesda's employees pose for a photo along with Capt. David A. Bitonti, Naval Support Activity Bethesda commanding officer, after receiving professional certifications for completing courses through the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute.**

and development."

Navy Lodge Bethesda front desk employee Angel Martinez received four different certifications as a certified concierge, laundry attendant, maintenance em-

ployee and guestroom attendant. He said it "feels awesome" to get the certificates, but he enjoyed learning how to help out in various jobs at Navy Lodge Bethesda more.

Navy Lodge Bethesda

Housekeeping Supervisor Delfina Fuentes, a 13-year Navy Lodge Bethesda employee, said she was happy to receive her certification as a certified public space cleaner because the courses

helped her become a better hospitality professional.

Her colleague, Navy Lodge Bethesda Housekeeping Supervisor Rosa Reyes said she was excited to receive the certification as a certified public space cleaner.

"I'm happy to work at the Navy Lodge Bethesda," said Reyes, a 19-year Navy Lodge Bethesda employee.

Dorris Arriaga, Marta Cotom, Santos Iraheta, Adrina Titus and Juana Velasquez all received certified public space cleaner certifications; Roberto C. Huamantumba, certified maintenance employee; and Steven T. Kelley, certified concierge, maintenance employee, laundry attendant and guestroom attendant.



# WRNMMC Helps Prepare Athletes for Warriors Games

Rehab, Adaptive Sports Program Enable Participants to Compete, Excel in Life, Athletic Venues

By Bernard S. Little  
WRNMMC Public  
Affairs staff writer

A number of the athletes who will participate in the Department of Defense (DOD) Warrior Games, set for June 19-28 at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., credit their ability to compete in the Olympic-style competition to the care

and rehabilitation they received at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC), the military's flagship health-care facility. Held annually, the Warrior Games brings together wounded, ill or injured athletes from across the country for a weeklong event in adaptive sports. Created by DOD and U.S. Paralympics in 2010, the

Warrior Games consist of eight sports – track, field, sitting volleyball, cycling, wheelchair basketball, swimming, archery and air rifle/pistol shooting. The United Kingdom's Prince Harry began the Invictus Games, an international version of the Warrior Games, last year after he'd been to the 2013 Warrior Games. This year's Warrior

Games will be the first for Army Staff Sgt. Monica E. Martinez, attached to the Warrior Transition Battalion at WRNMMC. She will compete in hand cycling, track and field (wheelchair racing, seated shot-put and discus), sitting volleyball and swimming, as well as be an alternate on the Army team for the archery competition. Hand-cycling is the competition the staff

sergeant said she is most looking forward to in the Games. "It was the first adaptive sport I got into at [WRNMMC], and I used to be a rower in high school; [hand-cycling] reminds me a lot of that, plus I love the feeling of just riding through the woods, the wind in my face," Martinez explained.

In preparation for the Games, the Soldier participates in a cycling program at WRNMMC, in addition to working out regularly on her own, swimming and lifting weights. She also attends archery clinics at Fort Belvoir, Va.

An intelligence analyst, Martinez began receiving care at WRNMMC August of last year after being shot in the foot on July 29, 2014 while deployed to Afghanistan.

"The bullet went through my foot [and] my right heel bone was shattered," the staff sergeant recalled of the July 29, 2014 injury. "I had my first surgery in Bagram, my second in Landstuhl, Germany, then I was flown to [WRNMMC]."

"I had four surgeries to fix my heel and may or may not need another. I was unable to walk until late November, six months after my last surgery, and then it was slowly in a boot and cane. I was in physical therapy until April and they pushed me to get as much function back [as possible]. I am used to being active and not needing help so for me, moving slowly and needing assistance to do basic things was frustrating. I also missed working and being with my unit; knowing they were still deployed and I couldn't be with them was incredibly hard," Martinez said.

"I find out [this month] if I need another surgery or not," she continued. "Full recovery is expected to take 12 to 18 months, but at 10 months in, I am doing better than my doctor expected."

"My medical care at [WRNMMC] has been outstanding, and they have done an amazing job repairing my heel and joint

to allow me to return to my previous levels of activity," the Soldier continued. "Adaptive sports have been instrumental in giving me that focus and push to get back to where I want to be physically, but the sense of camaraderie and team has given me the mental edge to stay focused and driven. The Army team is an amazing group of athletes who have all suffered in some way, but we are still very capable of doing incredible things."

Sgt. Blake Johnson is proof of that. During the Warrior Games Army Trials at Fort Bliss, Texas in March, he earned bronze medals in 50-meter freestyle, 50-meter backstroke and 100-meter freestyle, ensuring his place in the Warrior Games later this month.

An Apache AH-64 armament/electrical/avionic systems repairman, Johnson, of the WTB at WRNMMC, will also compete in air rifle, shot put, discus, wheelchair track, sitting volleyball and wheelchair basketball, in addition to swimming.

Like Martinez, Johnson explained participating in adaptive sports helps him with his rehabilitation. While stationed in Germany, he was injured in a motor vehicle accident in 2012. He fractured his femur and tibia, shattered his patella, ripped his patella ligament, ripped cartilage and had knee reconstruction. He had a partial knee replacement in October 2014, and has had five surgeries.

Like Martinez, Johnson brings an athletic background prior to his injuries with him to the Warrior Games. He ran track, in addition to playing football and baseball in high school. He also played basketball recreationally in high school. Again like Martinez, he explained adaptive sports refueled his competitive fire.

"Adaptive sports have been a really big morale boost for me," Johnson said. "Just getting back to playing with a team, being

See **GAMES** page 10

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# HERITAGE

Continued from pg. 3

from a two-year tour in Bahrain where she was the senior enlisted leader (SEL) of her unit. She also served with the Marines on two tours in Iraq, in addition to a number of other assignments during her nearly three-decade military career. She is currently the SEL for the National Intrepid Center of Excellence at WRNMMC.

“In 27 years, I’ve seen the transformation not only in our Navy, but in the military,” Robinson said. “Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have played a crucial role in shaping our military. They have served on all levels, from E-1 to O-10. Despite racial discrimination, hatred, violence, bigotry and even internment, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have served

this country with honor and patriotism. Time and time again, they proved that, as President Franklin Roosevelt said, ‘Americanism is not, and never was, a matter of race or ancestry.’”

Robinson added more work is needed within the military and workforce in general, towards better diversity and equal opportunity for not only Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, but for other diverse groups and women as well.

Following Robinson’s speech, students from the Natananjali School of Dance performed Bharatanatyam, a popular form of classical dance from the southern part of India. Originating as a temple dance, Bharatanatyam has been performed for more than 2000 years. The Natananjali students, in colorful attire, used various hand gestures, intricate foot-

work, body movements and dramatic facial expressions in their interpretive Bharatanatyam dance routines.

Afterwards, those in attendance were treated to chicken tikka masala, a traditional South Asian dish of roasted chunks (tikka) of chicken in a creamy, spiced and orange-colored sauce. The meal was served by members of the Multi-Cultural Committee, sponsor of the program and other cultural awareness activities at WRNMMC.

Asian-Pacific is a broad term used to describe all people who originated from the Asian continent and the Pacific islands of Melanesia (New Guinea, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Fiji, and the Solomon Islands), Micronesia (Marianas, Guam, Wake Island, Palau, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, and the Federated States of Micronesia), and Poly-

nesia (New Zealand, Hawaiian Islands, Rotuma, Midway Islands, Samoa, American Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Cook Islands, French Polynesia, and Easter Island).

In his 2015 proclamation for Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, President Barack Obama stated, “This year also marks the 40th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War, which brought new Vietnamese, Cambodian, Hmong, and Laotian commu-

nities to this country. But as we recognize the enormous progress America has made, we must also acknowledge the many struggles AAPIs continue to experience in the face of persistent inequality and bigotry, including barriers to equal access to education, employment, and health care. South Asian Americans - especially those who are Muslim, Hindu, or Sikh - too often face senseless violence and harassment due only to the color of their skin or

the tenets of their faith. “As we commemorate Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, we pay tribute to all those in the AAPI community who have striven for a brighter future for the next generation. Together, let us recommit to embracing the diversity that enriches our Nation and to ensuring all our people have an equal chance to succeed in the country we love,” the president’s proclamation concludes.

# GAMES

Continued from pg. 8

able to compete again and have that normal feeling, it’s really helped. It’s probably been the best morale booster anyone can have, at least for me.

“I had big plans before I got injured,” Johnson continued. “It happened, and you may have that self-pity in the beginning, but you have to push to recreate yourself to be the person you want to be, to take every obstacle and challenge you have and make it a plus.

“When you do find yourself sitting there and doubting yourself, you need to regroup and maybe not fix it, but find a new path, because the path you had is not there anymore. I was a runner, and now I swim a lot. I enjoy competing. I’m where I want to be.”

Johnson, who’s been in the Army five years, said he will continue to serve because it is a family tradition; his father is a command sergeant major stationed at Fort Hood, Texas.

“My dad has served 24 years,” he added. “After he did his deployments, I joined the Army because I felt I needed to do my time, too -- to serve my country.”

Martinez’s patriotic sentiments are similar.

“As the child of two immigrant parents, I have had no family serve in the U.S. military,” Martinez said. “My parents immigrated to ensure better opportunities for themselves and their children. I had an outstanding education, but I felt I could do more and wanted to give back to



Photo by Spc. Jamill Ford

**Army Staff Sgt. Monica Martinez reaches the halfway point of the 30-kilometer cycling event during the Army Trials on Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas, March 29, 2015.**

the country that has given my family so many opportunities. I enlisted in June 2008 as an intelligence analyst, two years after graduating from the University of Virginia with a [bachelor’s degree] in psychology. I am still the only person in my family who has chosen to serve and I wear the uniform with pride.”

This is the first year DOD is organizing the Warrior Games, which were previously run by the U.S. Olympic Committee and held at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo., according to DOD officials.

Adaptive sports and athletic reconditioning activities play a fundamental role in recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration of service members back to their units, or as they transition into the civilian environment, DOD officials add.

“The courage, strength and skill of our warrior athletes and their families inspire their fellow ser-

vicemen and women, and Americans everywhere,” Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Jessica Wright said. “Everyone in the Department of Defense looks forward to celebrating the athletes’ accomplishments before, during and after June’s competition.”

Since its inception, the Military Adaptive Sports Program has assisted more than 158,000 wounded, ill and injured service members at 325 structured camps and clinics for activities, including basketball, cycling, track, field, swimming, golf, sitting volleyball, yoga and gardening, according to DOD officials.

The 2015 DOD Warrior Games will feature approximately 200 athletes representing teams from the U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Special Operations Command and British Armed Forces.

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